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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of the Reading Recovery Pilot program of the school district of the city of Saginaw, Michigan. Thirty-five of the original 55 students in the program were successfully discontinued from the program--they read with a 90% or greater level of accuracy materials being used in the classroom and use the kinds of strategies that good readers use. Two groups of randomly sampled first grade Compensatory Education students served as comparison students. Subjects were administered the Diagnostic Survey and subtests of the California Achievement Test. Results indicated that successfully discontinued Reading Recovery children outgained comparison children on five of the six subtests of the Diagnostic Survey and on all three reading subtests of the California Achievement Tests. Findings suggest that the Reading Recovery program should be continued and expanded and that the design for future research should include other instruments that may better chart students' progress over the years. (Four tables of data are included; one appendix of data and an outline of the long-term study of the effectiveness of the Reading Recovery program are attached.) (RS)

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EVALUATION REPORT

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PRODUCT EVALUATION:

READING RECOVERY PROGRAM

1991-92

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION SERVICES

- PROVIDING ASSESSMENT, PROGRAM EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SERVICES -

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COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PRODUCT EVALUATION:

READING RECOVERY PROGRAM

1991-92

An Approved Report of the

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION, TESTING AND RESEARCH

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October, 1992

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The School District of the City of Saginaw operates a supplemental educational delivery system in reading and mathematics consisting of two programs - secondary and elementary Compensatory Education (CE). The CE programs are funded by both the Federal Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) Chapter 1 and Article 3 of the State School Aid Act. The secondary CE is a self-contained classroom program which involved approximately 772 students in grades seven through twelve. In its second year was the Thinking Skills Program (TSP) that operated in grades 7-9 in a self-contained room setting.[1] The elementary CE is both a push-in program (that operates in the regular classroom in grades one and two) and pull-out program (periodically taking students out of regular classrooms) that serve (combined) 2,045 students in grades one through six. The Reading Recovery program (a pull-out intervention in reading in grade one serving approximately 55 pupils) was piloted starting in December, 1991.

The focus of this report is the pilot of the Reading Recovery program. The Compensatory Education Product Evaluation: Elementary and Secondary Programs, 1991-92 briefly reviewed results of the pilot for both "successfully discontinued" as well as "continued" students. A successfully discontinued student has gained enough to read most classroom material with 90% accuracy. However, any evaluation is best done on those students that received the full treatment (successfully discontinued). The National Diffusion Network (NDN), which operates with the U.S. Department of Education, has chosen to study Reading Recovery children who have successfully discontinued, or continued

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[1]The Thinking Skills Program (TSP) is the local name for the nationally validated Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program.

children with 60 or more Reading Recovery sessions. Since our pilot operated approximately half a year with Mondays devoted to training of the Reading Recovery teachers not a single participant received a total of 60 lessons. Thus the focus of the present evaluation findings will explore test results from the 35 successfully discontinued Reading Recovery children with other CE children at non-Reading Recovery sites.

Reading Recovery Pilot

The Reading Recovery Pilot program (a pull-out intervention for 55 pupils in reading in grade one) was started in December, 1991. At the conclusion of the pilot, there were 35 Reading Recovery pupils. The pilot took place at eight elementary sites. They were the following: Coulter, Nelle Haley, Loomis, Longfellow, Longstreet, Salina, Webber, and Heavenrich.

A comparison group of first grade compensatory education students were randomly sampled from five elementary sites. The sites where students were selected for the random sample included Baillie, Emerson, Houghton, Morley, and Rouse. The random sample of approximately 26 compensatory education pupils were selected for pre- and post-testing on the Diagnostic Survey[2]. A group of approximately 126 compensatory education participants were selected to be pre- and post-tested on the California Achievement Test (CAT) as another comparison group that extended to all first grade compensatory education sites.

Reading Recovery is based on the premise that early, high-quality help has the greatest potential for lasting impact and for reducing the need for continued compensatory help. The program is an intensive one-to-one intervention program for the poorest readers (lowest 20 percent) in first-grade classrooms, as identified by teacher judgment and a Diagnostic Survey. The primary goals of Reading Recovery are to reduce reading failure through early intervention and to help children become independent readers. The

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[2]The Diagnostic Survey is a systematic observation assessment (six different assessments in different aspects of reading and writing) used as part of the Reading Recovery procedures. A full discussion of its potential uses and procedures can be found in Clay, M. M. (1990). The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties. Auckland, New Zealand Heinemann Education.

program accomplishes this by: 1) bringing children who are "at risk" of reading failure up to the average of their class within a short period of time, so that they can profit from ongoing classroom instruction, and 2) helping these children develop a self-improving system for continued growth in reading, so that additional help is not necessary.

Reading Recovery supplements but does not substitute for conventional classroom teaching. During daily, 30-minute lessons, teachers who are specially trained in Reading Recovery techniques individually tutor these faltering readers to help them develop the kinds of strategies that good readers use. The power of Reading Recovery is in the framework of the lesson itself and in the development of teacher knowledge and problem-solving ability. The approach combines the use of related reading and writing experiences, close interaction between teacher and child within the lesson, and careful selection of materials for reading. In this instructional program, the teacher follows and guides the child individually in his or her use of reading and writing strategies. The teacher closely assesses and monitors progress and makes appropriate decisions to accelerate the child's program.

Research to date indicates that Reading Recovery has potential for substantially reducing the number of children with reading difficulties. As a result of accelerated progress, children typically leave the program within 12 to 16 weeks and are able to perform at satisfactory levels in reading without continued extra help. The sustained success that Reading Recovery achieves with the poorest performers in first grade classes runs counter to the experience in most remedial education programs.

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION

As indicated above, this evaluation focused on the successfully discontinued Reading Recovery participants. A successfully discontinued Reading Recovery pupil must read at a 90% or better accuracy level in material that is currently being used in the classroom. But this accuracy level is necessary but still is not sufficient for a pupil to be successfully discontinued. In addition, the successfully discontinued pupil must display reading strategies that other readers normally display. These strategies include:

- Reads from left to right;
- One-to-one correspondence between visual and spoken;
- Monitors own reading and uses a balanced set of cues i.e., meaning, structural, and visual cues, in the reading and correction processes;
- Employs cross-checking cues; and
- Obtains a self-correcting ratio of at least one correction to every five erros.

Once a Reading Recovery pupil exhibits these above behaviors to the Reading Recovery teacher, the Reading Recovery supervisor verifies the teacher's observation for each successfully discontinued pupil.

Two comparison groups were selected to contrast the results of the successfully discontinued Reading Recovery participants. A group of first grade compensatory education students were randomly sampled from five non-Reading Recovery elementary sites. The sites where students were selected for the random sample included Baillie, Emerson, Houghton, Morley, and Rouse. The random sample of approximately 26 compensatory education pupils were selected

for pre- and post-testing on the Diagnostic Survey. A comparison group of approximately 126 compensatory education participants were selected to be pre- and post-tested on the California Achievement Tests[3] (CAT) Form E as another comparison group that extended to all first grade compensatory education sites. The first sample tested on the Diagnostic Survey was also included as part of the larger sample of approximately 126 to be tested on CAT.

Two research questions were the focus of comparing results of the successfully discontinued Reading Recovery group and comparison groups.

These questions follow:

1) How did Reading Recovery children (discontinued) and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a variety of measures of reading ability?

2) How did Reading Recovery (discontinued) and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a nationally normed standardized test?

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[3]The California Achievement Tests (CAT) -- Form E/F normed Spring, 1985 for grades K-12 serve as the pre- to post-test evaluation instrument for Saginaw's Compensatory Education (CE) programs.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

A total of 55 pupils were served by the Reading Recovery staff. Of this number 20 were continued and the remaining 35 were successfully discontinued from Reading Recovery. Table 1 below contrasts the successfully discontinued, continued, and Total Reading Recovery groups by ethnic background, gender, and year of birth.

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF THE SUCCESSFULLY DISCONTINUED, CONTINUED, AND TOTAL READING RECOVERY TOTAL, ETHNIC BACKGROUND, GENDER, AND YEAR OF BIRTH, 1991-92.

Variable	READING RECOVERY PARTICIPANTS					
	Successfully Discontinued		Continued		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	35	100.0	20	100.0	55	100.0
ETHNIC BACKGROUND						
White	3	8.6	0	0.0	3	5.4
Black	30	85.7	19	95.0	49	89.2
Hispanic	2	5.7	1	5.0	3	5.4
Oriental	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
American Indian	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
GENDER						
Male	13	37.1	11	55.0	24	43.6
Female	22	62.9	9	45.0	31	56.4
YEAR OF BIRTH						
1983	1	2.9	0	0.0	1	1.8
1984	9	25.7	11	55.0	20	36.4
1985	25	71.4	9	45.0	34	61.8

A study of the demographic variables above shows that both successfully discontinued and continued Reading Recovery participants were almost exclusively minority (91.4% and 100% respectively). Successfully discontinued

students showed a greater precentage of female pupils (62.9%) than the continued participants (45.4%). The successfully discontinued Reading Recovery participant showed the largest percentage birth year of 1985 (71.4%) while the continued participants showed the largest percentage of birth year of 1984 (55.0%).

Table 2 below contrasts the groups, which are the focus of this report, in terms of ethnic background, gender, and year of birth.

TABLE 2. CONTRAST OF THE SUCCESSFULLY DISCONTINUED READING RECOVERY PARTICIPANTS, COMPARISON GROUPS ADMINISTERED THE DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY AND THE COMPARISON GROUPS ADMINISTERED THE CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TESTS BY TOTAL, ETHNIC BACKGROUND, GENDER, AND YEAR OF BIRTH, 1991-92.

Variable	Successfully Discontinued Reading Recovery Participants		Comparison Group Administered Diagnostic Survey		Comparison Group Administered California Achievement Tests	
	Number	Percent	Number	Precent	Number	Percent
TOTAL	35	100.0	20	100.0	113	100.0
ETHNIC BACKGROUND						
White	3	8.6	1	5.0	5	4.4
Black	30	85.7	19	95.0	96	85.0
Hispanic	2	5.7	0	0.0	12	10.6
Oriental	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
American Indian	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
GENDER						
Male	13	37.1	7	35.0	51	45.1
Female	22	62.9	13	65.0	62	54.9
YEAR OF BIRTH						
1983	1	2.9	0	0.0	15	13.3
1984	9	25.7	8	40.0	45	39.8
1985	25	71.4	12	60.0	53	46.9

A perusal of Table 2 above shows that successfully discontinued participants and the comparison groups for the Diagnositc Survey and CAT were very similar in terms of demongraphics. This similarity is shown with a majority of the representatives being the following:

- From a minority (Black and Hispanic) ethnic background (91.4%, 95.0%, and 95.6%) respectively;
- Of the female gender (62.9%, 65.0%, and 54.9%) respectively; and
- Of the 1985 year of birth (71.4%, 60.0%, and 46.9%) respectively.

As indicated earlier the first research question was the following:

1) How did Reading Recovery children (successfully discontinued) and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a variety of measures of reading ability?

Table 3 below presents the means and standard deviations for the Reading Recovery discontinued children and a comparison group of children at non-Reading Recovery Pilot sites. The statistics given in Table 3 relate to the six subtests of the Diagnostic Survey which are expressed as number right except for text reading which is a numerical score and refers to the level of difficulty a child can read with 90% accuracy or above (see Appendix A for conversion chart).

TABLE 3. MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR SUCCESSFULLY DISCONTINUED READING RECOVERY CHILDREN AND RANDOM SAMPLE OF FIRST GRADERS ON SIX MEASURES FROM THE DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY, DECEMBER AND MAY, 1991-92.

Measure	Month	Successfully Discontinued Reading Recovery Children			Comparison Children		
		N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.
Text Reading (Max=34)	Dec.	35	**2.29**	1.23	20	**4.00**	3.58
	May	35	**18.17**	6.11	20	**10.65**	9.12
Letter Ident. (Max=54)	Dec.	35	**51.66**	2.22	20	**48.10**	8.68
	May	35	**53.34**	0.95	20	**50.55**	7.25
Word Test (Max=20)	Dec.	35	**6.80**	2.53	20	**7.90**	6.07
	May	35	**19.14**	1.29	20	**14.10**	6.30
Concepts About Print (Max=24)	Dec.	35	**13.45**	3.32	20	**12.60**	3.35
	May	35	**20.57**	2.16	20	**15.45**	3.51
Writing Vocabulary (10 min.)	Dec.	35	**27.71**	9.26	20	**26.45**	15.61
	May	35	**57.14**	16.62	20	**33.55**	18.37
Dictation (Max=37)	Dec.	35	**19.80**	6.16	20	**19.45**	11.59
	May	35	**34.45**	3.63	20	**26.50**	10.13

Highlights from Table 3 include the following:

- Although the Reading Recovery and comparison group had similar mean scores for the six subtests assessed in December, 1991, the successfully discontinued Reading Recovery group scored higher on all six measures at the end of the school year than the comparison group.

- When contrasting pre- to post-test average gains the largest difference between these gains occurred in writing vocabulary with the comparison group gaining 7.10 (33.55 - 26.45) raw score points and the successfully discontinued Reading Recovery group gaining 29.43 (57.14 - 27.71) raw score points. Overall on average, the Reading Recovery group outgained the comparison group by 22.33 raw score points on the writing vocabulary subtest.

- Again, when contrasting pre- to post-test average gains, the smallest difference between these gains occurred in letter identification with the comparison group gaining 2.45 (50.55 - 48.10) raw score points and the Reading Recovery group gaining 1.68 (53.34 - 51.66) raw score points. Overall on average, the comparison group outgained the Reading Recovery group by 0.77 raw score points on the letter identification subtest.

The other research question related to gains on a nationally normed standardized test. This question is restated below.

2) How did Reading Recovery and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a nationally normed standardized test?

Table 4 below records the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) gain scores for the discontinued Reading Recovery group, comparison group, and all first grade children tested on the reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading total subtests of the California Achievement Tests (CAT).

TABLE 4. MEAN NORMAL CURVE EQUIVALENT (NCE) GAIN SCORES FOR GRADE 1 DISCONTINUED READING RECOVERY, COMPARISON, AND DISTRICT-WIDE GROUPS IN READING VOCABULARY, READING COMPREHENSION, AND READING TOTAL BASED ON APRIL-MAY, 1991 PRE-TESTING AND APRIL-MAY, 1992 POST-TESTING ON CAT (SPRING TO SPRING).

Subtest/Group	Number Tested	Normal Curve Equivalents		
		Pre-Test Mean (Spring, 1991)	Post-Test Mean (Spring, 1992)	Mean Gain/ Loss
Reading Vocabulary				
Discont. Reading Recovery	30	23.9	48.8	**24.9**
Comparison	89	22.1	42.7	**20.6**
District-Wide*	1,014	49.3	46.8	**- 2.5**
Reading Comprehension				
Discont. Reading Recovery	30	34.6	43.7	**9.1**
Comparison	89	30.2	39.2	**9.0**
District-Wide	1,014	48.1	44.8	**- 3.3**
Reading Total				
Discont. Reading Recovery	30	26.1	45.2	**19.1**
Comparison	89	22.0	39.0	**17.0**
District-Wide	1,014	48.6	44.2	**- 4.4**

*District-wide results included all matched students pre-tested during Spring, 1991 and again post-tested in grade one during Spring, 1992. This group also included the discontinued Reading Recovery and comparison groups.

A review of Table 4 above, reveals the following highlights:

- When students were pre-tested with the California Achievement Test (CAT), the discontinued Reading Recovery group was better than the comparison group by 1.8, 4.4, and 4.1 NCEs for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading total respectively. The district-wide group was better than the Reading Recovery group by 25.4, 13.5, and 22.5 respectively.

- Both discontinued Reading Recovery and comparison group children showed positive NCE gain scores from pre- to post-testing. However, discontinued Reading Recovery group children outgained comparison children by 4.3, 0.1, and 2.1 NCEs for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading total respectively.

- District-wide children, on the other hand, had minus NCE gain scores from pre- to post-testing. The district-wide group lost -2.5, -3.3, and -4.4 NCEs for reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading total respectively.

Further research plans into the Reading Recovery Pilot calls for following this the first Reading Recovery cohort and its comparison groups for the next four school years. The results will be reported in the Compensatory Education Product Evaluation Report so long as the cohort group size remains above 15. A second long-term tracking of Reading Recovery students (second Reading Recovery cohort) will start in the 1993-94 school year after more Reading Recovery teachers are trained and the current partially trained teachers complete the year long instruction. Again, the second study will track the second Reading Recovery cohort for four years after they receive the Reading Recovery treatment in 1993-94.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Reading Recovery Pilot program (a pull-out intervention for 55 pupils in reading in grade one) was started in December, 1991. Reading Recovery supplements but does not substitute for conventional classroom teaching. During daily, 30-minute lessons, teachers who are specially trained in Reading Recovery techniques individually tutor these faltering readers to help them develop the kinds of strategies that good readers use. The approach combines the use of related reading and writing experiences, close interaction between teacher and child within the lesson, and careful selection of materials for reading. In this instructional program, the teacher follows and guides the child individually in his or her use of reading and writing strategies. The teacher closely assesses and monitors progress and makes appropriate decisions to accelerate the child's program.

This year after close monitoring of the 55 children in Reading Recovery, a total of 35 children were successfully discontinued from the program. Successfully discontinued pupils can read with a 90% or greater level of accuracy of materials being used in the classroom and now use the kinds of strategies that good readers use to self-correct their own reading. The results of the 35 successfully discontinued Reading Recovery children served as those pupils that received the complete treatment. Randomly sampled first graders Compensatory Education children served as comparison children. Reading Recovery and comparison children were pre- and post-tested on the Diagnostic Survey and the California Achievement Tests - Form E (CAT) normed 1985. Since the Diagnostic Survey is an individually administered test with six subtest scores, only 20 comparison children were pre- and post-tested on this instrument.

The research questions examined were:

1) How did Reading Recovery children (discontinued) and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a variety of measures of reading ability?

2) How did Reading Recovery and comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a nationally normed standardized test?

The findings to both questions was that successfully discontinued Reading Recovery children outgained comparison children on five of the six subtests of the Diagnostic Survey (gains in excess of the comparison group ranged from 4.27 to 22.33 raw score points on concepts about print and writing vocabulary respectively) and on all three reading subtests of the California Achievement Tests (gains in excess of the comparison group ranged from 0.1 to 4.3 NCE points on reading comprehension and reading vocabulary respectively).

The results of Reading Recovery Pilot presented herein tend to suggest that this program has promise (when you realize the current set of Reading Recovery teachers are only half trained) and its long-term effectiveness should be tracked for the four additional school years as planned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are based on this year's product evaluation of the Reading Recovery Pilot and are intended to help bring about improvements in the following school year.

The recommended ideas and techniques offered below stem from a perceived problem and are just one of many ways to improve the performance of the program. As solutions are sought for optimum program operations, a dialogue/ discussion should be undertaken to determine the best and most workable way to solve the perceived problem. The staff and evaluator should be brought into these discussions so that all involved feel part of the proposed new operation of the program.

- As stated above, the Reading Recovery Pilot results suggest that this program has promise and it should be continued and expanded to further test its effectiveness with fully trained Reading Recovery teachers.

- The research design for 1992-96 (see Appendix B) should be expanded to also include relevant subtests of the Diagnostic Survey and other instruments that may better chart the progress of both the Reading Recovery and comparison children over the course of the next three years of the study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY'S TEXT READING NUMERICAL SCORE CONVERSION TO BASAL READING LEVELS.

The Text Reading Levels are roughly equivalent to the following basal reader levels:

TEXT READING NUMERICAL SCORE*	BASAL LEVEL	TEXT READING NUMERICAL SCORE	BASAL LEVEL
A-2	Readiness	22-24	Grade 3 Readers
3-4	PP1	26	Grade 4
5-6	PP2	28	Grade 5
7-8	PP3	30	Grade 6
9-12	Primer	32	Grade 7
14-16	Grade 1 Readers	34	Grade 8
18-20	Grade 2 Readers		

*Text reading numerical scores for the readiness basal reader level of A and B were assigned the scores of -1 and 0 respectively.

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF SAGINAW

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION, TESTING & RESEARCH

TO: William Cheaney
Mary Ciolek
Ruth Beyerlein

FROM: Richard N. Claus RNC

RE: Long-term Study of the Effectiveness of the 1991-92 Reading Recovery Program

DATE: January 24, 1992

This memo will serve to outline a proposed study into the effectiveness of Reading Recovery versus Chapter 1/Article 3. These treatments are the two current interventions provided by Chapter 1/Article 3 staffs on the East Side of Saginaw. Reading Recovery operates at Coulter, Haley, Loomis, Longfellow, Longstreet, Salina, Webber, and Heavenrich. Our typical Chapter 1/Article 3 sites being used as comparison sites are Baillie, Emerson, Houghton, Jones, Morley, and Rouse.

Count of Subjects By Treatment Category

- Reading Recovery Participants (discontinued from service due to mastery or due to having experienced 60 or more lessons) = 42 to a maximum of 80.
- Comparison Group of Participants tested with the Diagnostic Survey = approximately 26 or fewer depending upon time available to conduct the individual pre- and post-testing.
- Sample Group of Participants to be tested on CAT = 50.

Achievement Measure By Year in Study

- 1991-92
  -- CAT - RV, RT, and RC
  -- Diagnostic Survey - six subtest scores
- 1992-1995
  -- CAT - RV, RT, and RC

Demographic Variables to Describe Treatment and Comparison Group

- Gender
- Racial/Ethnic Group
- School and Grade of attendance

APPENDIX B

Research Questions for 1991-92

1) How did Reading Recovery children (discontinued and not discontinued) and Comparison children perform at the end of grade one on a variety of measures of reading ability?

2) How did Reading Recovery and Comparison children perform at the end of grade one on nationally normed standardized tests?

Research Questions for 1992-96

1) How did the performance of Reading Recovery children (successfully discontinued and not discontinued) compare with the performance of Comparison children on Reading Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension and Reading Total of CAT at the end of second, third, fourth, and fifth grades?

2) Do successfully discontinued Reading Recovery children sustain the gains they achieved in first grade through the end of second, third, fourth, and fifth grades, without any further intervention?

It may be prudent to meet and discuss in more detail the particular aspects of the proposed research and the research questions. I am proposing that we might do this on February 6, 1992 at 1:30 in the Planning Room. Please contact me at extension 307 if you can attend.

RNC/ms

cc: Barry Quimper